



8th ANNUAL INT. FESTIVAL L.A.

The huge Philharmonic Auditorium of L.A. was well packed with an enthusiastic audience on March 26th. The presentations were enjoyable and of a much better caliber than their program of last year. Three annoyances were of general nature: 1) The lighting must have been toyed with by an amateur, who, in order to emphasize a soloist or special action, dimmed the spot lights so badly that no action was seen at all. And this annoyance occurred much too often. 2) Some solo dancers insisted on moving to perform to a far side of the stage, behind the front curtain, thus nearly a third of the paying audience (of expensive tickets) were unable to see what was being done, and fearing lest they miss something, experienced great stress. 3) The narration was not the hottest thing in the world. But the presentations themselves, aside for three numbers at most (and that depends upon individual taste), were delightful to watch and creditable to the groups.

U.S. was first on the program. Sixteen teenagers, Y-KnottTwirlers, presented a Square Dance Specialty as the "49'ers" have NOT seen, even in their pleasant dreams. It was a beautiful demonstration with plenty of twirling and petticoat exhibition, highly specialized and most un-American. It could have been a fancy Polish Mazur to a "drag-walk" plus much twirl.

IRAN presented a Village Wedding Dance plus song, which was not only interesting because of the rarity of Persian presentations, but it was actually good.

The AUSTRIAN Sterntanz with decorative twigs, who employed a simple walk weaving many interesting patterns, was quite delightful and their Schuhplattler was terrific.

INDIA was represented by Bhupesh Guha and a group of Western girls, and they danced like Western girls with hand undulations still mighty foreign to them. Tho Mr. Guha was good, and moved about like Krishna amid the Gopis.

IRELANDERS, for the most part, did some very good stepping (except for those out of step) during their Fairy Reel. Their soloists, to our regret, were dimmed out, and their fast footactions were lost in the darkness.

The ARMENIANS were exceptionally good. Better than last year and truer to Armenian dancing. They actually represented Armenia, not Ukraina. The costumes for men this year were very eye catching. Their leader, Martin Bohigian, is a very fine dancer.

FRANCE made one sick to the stomach. The dancing was well trained for what it was, but what is sickening is the fact that poor France is always misrepresented either by synthetics or by the Frenchmen themselves. If it isn't an Apache number, then it is the Can-Can. Neither is FOLK and neither is done by Frenchmen, but seen only in nightclubs of questionable reputations in Gay Paree or the slums of Marseilles purely for enticement. Some 20 dancers ran all over the stage like mad, twisting feet, flopping into splits, or turning to the audience and showing them their rear-ends (I wonder if the audience deserved it?). Everybody doing so many different things, one hardly knew where to focus attention. It was "mish-mash" in a mad house. Poor France, for shame!

JAPAN's dances were poetry in movement. A rewarding quiet after disturbing French racket. Harunobu Asuma moved about enchantingly in her Metukiyangi, a Kabuki

type of dance. A group of Japanese girls, in willowy kimonos and pink parasols really did convey spring with their Spring Dance of the Odori style. The tiny girl-sans were particularly cute.

The Mambo represented CUBA. Tho many may not consider the Mambo a folk dance, it at least is done by a majority, if not all, dancing Cubans. Some thirty youngsters cavorted well.

The NETHERLANDERS were very delightful. Their costumes were charming and so were their three simple presentations of Driekusman, Seven Jumps and Bean Pot, which proves that even a simple dance, sincerely and genuinely presented will enchant the audience with genuine appreciation.

The Vasa dancers represented SWEDEN with a delightfully interpreted Oxdans and the Daldans. They seem to be the best Ethnic group in Southern California. They moved about lithesomely with pleasure in their faces, feet and bodies.

The GREEK Syrtos, led by Chris Tasulis, deserves praise, too. Chris is an excellent line leader and his foot movements are eye-catching. He moves about like a benign sprite. The Khoriatikos of the Greek Macedonians done by Chris, Don Lanauer and Terry Mason, intrigued the audience.

A quartet, which included the leader Howard Bell, did proud for the SCOTTISH. Their presentations were flawless with every dancer a star.

A group of Mexican girls did the ancient Matlanchines of the MEXICAN Indians. The dance was well done tho the group could have been larger for this particular number. Proper lighting could have added the needed affect associated with this type of dance.

EGYPT was represented by people with Armenian and Greek names. The singer alone had an Arab name. A dance done by two girls was typical and seemed genuine enough, but the solo number had too much "hootchi kootchi." Her movements would have made a Swiss watch jealous.

A group from San Francisco (Changs) represented ROMANIA with a peculiar but most charming Hora from Auashului. More shaking but of a unique nature.

AFRICA was represented by Robert LeHouse, a nimble body twister of small and well formed stature. He writhed about with undulation which any woman could envy. Theodore Benedict produced drum beats truly fascinating. His fingers danced on the drum top.

The massing of the dancers on the stage for the finale, Made the scene bright in color. A "one world" bouquet.

The Whittier College Choir sang introductory folk song before the appearance of each group. Their well blended voices added considerably to the charm of the enjoyable evening. VFB.

LET'S DANCE

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Barrington, Ill., Festival

Emily Czernek

On Saturday, February 26th, a group of us went to Barrington for their folk festival. The weather was very nice when we left Chicago, a little damp perhaps, but by the time we got as far as Mt. Prospect—brother!—a thick fog set in (a la Los Angeles smog), so bad that poor Lenny Mickas in whose car we were travelling had his nose pressed against the windshield and still couldn't see the front of the car. We reached Barrington safely. (Many cars having gotten lost were forced to turn back—VFB). The way back was even worse so at times we were not sure that we were still on the road.

Frankly, I was a little disappointed because I did not think that this year's program came up to the standard set by previous festivals, not from the standpoint of the various groups that were performing because those that did appear were very good, but from the lack of variety, with only seven nationality groups participating. Perhaps I expected too much, seeing that this was the 10th anniversary program. Even the printed program was not attractive as of yore.

The program was opened and closed this year by the Polish Mazur Dancers of Milwaukee, who, as always, brought the house down with their beautiful and energetic presentation of the various dances from the different provinces of Poland and whose mountaineer numbers, with which they closed their performances, left even the spectators breathless.

Mae Kennedy Kane's Irish Dancers presented a series of jigs and reels—very well done.

The Irish were followed on the program by a Negro group from St. Louis, Missouri, who appeared at the Barrington festival for the first time. They appeared on the program four times, perhaps because they came such a long way to perform. Two of their numbers, the Cake Walk and the Charleston, were extremely good and were well received by the audience. However, the other two numbers had as much place on a folk festival program as a pair of old blue-jeans in the Easter parade. The number called "The Dancing Gypsies" was performed by a group of small tykes and was definitely a number such as you would find in a ballet school recital program—nothing folkish about it. The other number "The Classic Waltz" was of nightclub variety with lifts, spins, etc.—enough said!

The Israeli group listed on the program did not appear because several of their members were involved in an automobile accident several days before the festival, which, although not fatal to anyone, put several of the dancers in the hospital.

This year the Swedish group, under the direction of Harold Henning, presented an unusually good program of their dances which, in addition to the Daldans, Fryksdal and Vafa Vadmal, also included the ever popular "Oxdans." There was a gaiety to their dancing that was pleasant to see and both the dancers and audience had a good time.

The Big Timber and Kwo-ne-she dancers of Elgin, Illinois again presented the American Indian dances. This year the group was smaller which I think helped the overall picture, since it was easier to observe the individual dancers. Their costuming was brilliant, extremely elaborate but the dances, if anything, were a little too theatrical. The Barrington High school Dancers were good, as usual, in their square, round and cowboy dances.

The ATEITIS did themselves proud this time, going through three numbers with vim, vigor and vitality. Their first number, the "Aušrele," was a new one to me and they even sang while they danced—"real cute." The other two

numbers, Sustas and Malynas, also went off without a visible flaw. They really rated bouquets.

Mr. Truman Childs and the Barrington Dancers should be congratulated for keeping in the spirit of Brotherhood Week and keeping the interest in folk dancing alive in the Chicago area.

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LONG BEACH CO-OP FESTIVAL

On March 12th, The Co-Opers of Long Beach presented their Annual festival at the spacious Municipal Auditorium on the Pacific edge. The hall was charmingly and tastefully decorated with crepe paper flowers of pastel shades, as if spring were in bloom. The selection of dances for general participation was varied and "sane," and the spirit was high.

Six groups presented demonstrations. Eddie Masters' Irish Rovers, a group of youngsters from eight to eighteen, did creditably their jig dances. The Tuesday Nighters of Vivian Woll from San Diego did an elegant job with their Egressy Csardas and two "salt merchants from Ukraine" interpreted gaily the bleaved Chumak as a duet (Chumaki).

The old English favorite, "The Old Mens' Jig," was well done, without deviating from the traditional, by three males from the Gandy Dancers. The VILTIS dancers (San Diego) brought down the house again with their Lithuanian goat dance "Ozelis," which was danced by Jack Mona and Gene Fowler and "The Chain Dance" (Lenciugelis), which Jack Mona and four gals performed. Circle 8 from Bakersfield (Wilma Linscott) in their beautiful costumes (which were the envy of many a female) closed up the demonstrational part with their Csardasok "Semmi Baban Semmi."

Long Beach continued to maintain the reputation of presenting enjoyable festivals.

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WESTWOOD IS TEN

The Westwood Folk Dance Co-op celebrated its tenth anniversary with a festival. The dance was held at the Veteran's Municipal Auditorium at Culver City, Calif., on April 24th from one to six. The program for general dancing included a wide variety which were enjoyed by all (about 500) who participated and by a slightly smaller number of interested spectators.

Entertainment was provided by a number of presentations during the intermissions. Juliet and David Bernal danced "Las Espulelas" and "Valentino Tango"; the Sierra Dancers of San Diego presented "Slavonski Drmes"; The Yosemite Workshop did the "Moldavanets"; Las Polkitas by the Los Angelenos, a "Dream Waltz" by the rBigan-tes"; "Chervony Pas" by the Gandy dancers. The hit of the afternoon was a Ukrainian wedding scene by the youngsters of the Happy Valley School of Ojai, directed by David Young.

A very happy birthday to the Westwood Co-op Folk Dancers, and we wish you many more of the same.

G. Wicker

A NEW GROUP IN BAKERSFIELD

We have a newly formed group here in Bakersfield. What started simply as a summer beginners class last June, developed into an enthusiastic club. It is a completely co-operative group, with the teaching and other club activities shared by all. Altho the club is still comparatively small, dancing about 30 people, it does your heart good to see the wild energy and hooleyeh they display. We were assisted in organizing by Ernie and "Hip" Hipkins.

Jim Ryan.